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ABSTRACT

This publication is designed to assist high school educators in developing a comprehensive student services system. Following a brief introduction, section 2 focuses on the common features of a comprehensive student services delivery system. It offers brief highlights of existing forms of comprehensive school-linked strategies such as family resource centers, community school programs, information and referral programs, and school-based and school-linked comprehensive health programs. Section 3 describes three initiatives that each offer their own unique approach for providing a comprehensive set of student services: Youth Fair Change School-to-Career Program, Manual and East High Schools, Denver; Oklahoma's Statewide Plan; and the Pennsylvania Initiative. The programs vary in scope and delivery and are in different stages of implementation. Section 4 is a guide to developing a comprehensive student services system. It outlines the five-step process in a way that allows the user to skip to those steps that seem most appropriate to his or her situation. The steps are as follows: (1) identify the need; (2) develop a vision; (3) identify resources; (4) make a plan; and (5) get down to the nitty-gritty. Each section in the publication contains questions and activities that will assist in the development process. Appendixes contain 10 references and the Office of Student Services Brief, "Improving Student Services in Secondary Schools," which should be used in conjunction with this publication. (YLB)

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National Center for Research in Vocational Education

University of California, Berkeley

DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SERVICES SYSTEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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DEVELOPING COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SERVICES SYSTEMS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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MDS-777/December 1995/$7.00

Workplace Skills in Practice: Case Studies of Technical Work

Many believe that a "skills gap" threatens American productivity because students are not taught the generic skills of problem solving, decisionmaking, communication, and teamwork required in the new competitive business environment. The authors of this study test this belief by examining four diverse firms to see what skills and work attitudes are actually required. The study confirmed the importance of these skills, but also found that they vary considerably with work context in ways ignored by public policy. The authors noted that firms lack effective strategies for acquiring needed skills in their workforce, and that they do little to foster skill development among nonmanagerial workers. These instructive case studies will interest employers, industry groups, and policymakers, as well as educators involved with school-to-work transition issues. By C. Stasz, K. Ramsey, R. Eden, E. Melamid, T. Kaganoff.
MDS-773/May 1996/$12.50

Improving Performance Measures and Standards for Workforce Education

A recent NCRVE study of the effects of Perkins II (*Improving Perkins II Performance Measures and Standards: Lessons Learned from Early Implementers in Four States*, MDS-732) found that the performance measures and standards provisions designed to promote program improvement were not achieving their full potential. This report examines the implications of that research for enhancing accountability in future federal workforce preparation legislation. It also illustrates specifically how the language of Perkins II could be changed to carry out the recommendations of the earlier study. By B. M. Stecher, L. M. Hanser, M. L. Rahn, K. Levesque, S. G. Klein, D. Emanuel.
MDS-821/May 1995/$5.50

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educators in school districts across the country have expressed a need for help in developing a comprehensive student services system. This publication has been developed in response to that need. It serves as follow-up to a paper developed by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education's Office of Student Services (OSS) that offered a rationale and a model for a comprehensive student services system—*Student Services: Achieving Success for All Secondary Students*. In the text, the reader will find a description of the services high schools should provide under such a system. This paper also focuses on the common features of a comprehensive student services delivery system and provides a description of three initiatives. The final section offers a guide to developing a comprehensive student services system.

Each of the sections in this publication contains questions and activities that will help school districts in the process of developing or redesigning their student services system. Because each school system is unique, specific solutions are not offered, but, rather, simple, practical steps educators can use to build a system to meet their school's unique needs are suggested. This publication is designed for use in conjunction with the OSS BRIEF, *Improving Student Services in Secondary Schools,* included in Appendix A.

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INTRODUCTION

In November 1995, the Office of Student Services (OSS) of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education (NCRVE) provided a rationale for a comprehensive student services system and described the services that high schools need to provide under such a system. That rationale was published in an OSS BRIEF entitled *Improving Student Services in Secondary Schools* (see Appendix A). This paper focuses on the common features of a comprehensive student services delivery system and provides a description of three programs based on this concept. The last section offers a guide on how to develop a comprehensive student services system. The terms *student services* and *school-linked strategies* are used interchangeably in this document.

FEATURES OF A COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT SERVICES SYSTEM

Local and state educators and community service providers are increasingly aware of the need to collaborate to improve results for children and youth. Changes in federal policy, the notion that children and youth are not faring well, the clamor for better governance, as well as failure of existing systems have triggered the push towards forming partnerships and collaborating in order to deliver effective services to students and other youth in the community.

In May 1996, the U.S. Department of Education published a document entitled *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-Linked Strategies for Children and Families*. This document outlines ideas, issues, and solutions that can help schools and their partners in designing, implementing, or modifying comprehensive school-linked strategies for helping children and families. According to this document, comprehensive strategies accomplish the following:

- Build community resources and relationships.
- Solve immediate problems and develop capacity to avoid future crises.
- Build collaboration among all of the community's major groups and cultures.

- Involve multiple stakeholders in all stages of program planning, design, and implementation.
- Communicate in languages accessible to all partners.
- Flow from a shared vision about improving long-term conditions for children, families, and communities. (p. 3)

Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-Linked Strategies for Children and Families describes existing forms of comprehensive school-linked strategies such as family resource centers, community school programs, information and referral programs, and school-based and school-linked comprehensive health programs.

Family Resource Centers . . .

- are often located in schools, community centers, or public housing developments.
- enhance parenting skills, prevent crises, and connect families to an array of existing resources.
- are mostly operated by families for families in the community.

Community School Programs . . .

- serve as hubs of communities.
- provide services to all members of the community.
- offer adult education and skill development, youth-focused activities, athletic programs, tutoring and mentoring, and other programs that build academic and social skills.
- emphasize informal community opportunities and links with community agencies.

Information and Referral Programs . . .

- improve communication among agencies by reducing transportation and eligibility barriers.

- may utilize a case management approach, in which a single worker such as a family advocate acts as connector/broker for families.

School-Based and School-Linked Comprehensive Health Programs . . .

- primarily serve children and focus on a broad range of health services.
- reach children through the school, health, and mental health care providers who might otherwise have no access to these services.

NCRVE staff envision a comprehensive student services program that not only provides comprehensive school-linked services but also offers all other types of services, such as career counseling and work experiences, that students may need throughout their school life. Three initiatives have been identified that we feel exemplify many of the features characteristic of a comprehensive student services program.

STUDENT SERVICES DELIVERY: THREE INITIATIVES

The three programs described below each offer their own unique approach for providing a comprehensive set of student services. The programs vary in many different ways, including scope and delivery, and are in different stages of implementation.

Youth Fair Chance School-to-Career Program

The Youth Fair Chance School-to-Career Program (STC) at Manual and East High Schools in Denver offers a variety of services that empower students to focus on their academic and future career aspirations. The program targets students who are most at risk of failing, including students who have problems related to drug and gang involvement, teen pregnancy, employment and training, lack of sports and recreation, and family support. The high dropout rate for African American male students, especially at Manual High School, has historically been of particular concern to school staff and the community. In fact, the dropout rate was so high for that population that few of them finished high school for the last few years prior to implementation of the Youth Fair Chance School-to-

Career Program. The number of African American male students completing high school has increased from 6% in 1995 to 25% in 1997.

Program Operation

Program intake begins at the eighth-grade level through a series of outreach activities aimed at identifying students most at risk of failing or who have already failed in the system. Ninth- to twelfth-grade referrals are made by teachers and other school personnel. Students who identify themselves as needing help may also come to the STC center as walk-ins. Each of these students is then assigned a case manager and a mentor.

STC staff consists of the director, a senior consultant and social worker, a business internship coordinator, and case managers. Every staff member serves as a case manager for a group of 10 to 40 students, depending on the hours they work and their other responsibilities. Each staff member is responsible for their assigned students, handles all the paperwork related to their students, and coordinates their efforts with a team consisting of specialists from STC, school personnel, and community representatives. The team may include probation officers, business representatives, and service agency representatives.

The components of the program include implementation of an integrated curriculum, delivery of Applied Career Awareness modules, interaction with professional mentors, job shadowing and internship opportunities, and additional support services provided by case managers and social workers. In the integrated courses offered during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades (e.g., Biology and Geography), teachers use class time to highlight particular careers. The Career Awareness Preparation modules are offered during the ninth grade. Tenth graders avail themselves of job shadowing opportunities (typically a six-week, once per week program of visits) which offer exposure to a variety of positions within a given business. Job shadowing offers students opportunities to meet professionals, to experience the actual worksite, and to make decisions about their future. Hands-on experience is provided through internship placements which typically last 15 hours per week for nine weeks. Interns assist in the actual operation of a business. These experiences often lead to summer jobs or entry-level positions after graduation.

Basic services that students receive include development of an individual academic plan, assistance in putting together an academic portfolio, job placement, summer

employment, academic enrichment, support of mentors, community service, recreational/cultural activities, and counseling. Social services—provided as needed—also include child care, psychosocial assessment, crisis intervention, use of community resources, and service plan treatment.

Recognizing the crucial role that parents play in their children's educational aspirations, the program staff work diligently to involve parents in all aspects of their children's program. During 1995-1996, there was a marked increase in parent/family participation in activities such as school visits, home visits, and parent support groups. (See Appendix B for contact information.)

Oklahoma's Statewide Plan

The Oklahoma initiative began in 1989 when the State Legislature directed the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY) to work with the Oklahoma Planning and Coordinating Council for Services to Children and Youth to establish district and regional planning boards to help plan and implement services for children and youth. The state believed that ownership and responsibility for finding solutions to children's problems belong to local communities. District and regional planning boards offered a broad base of citizen representation, including concerned citizens and professionals from private organizations and agencies, local and state government agencies, and local school districts. The district boards serve as the working body of community leaders while the regional boards serve as coordinating bodies. The boards were then commissioned to develop strategic directions and action arenas (see Planning and Coordinating Organization chart on p. 8).

The structure of the Oklahoma program is unique and largely responsible for its success. The Planning and Coordinating Council on Services to Children and Youth is mandated by law and includes 36 positions held by members of public and private organizations. As the chart shows, planning and resource development begin at the district level and flow upward to the state level, while training and other technical assistance flow back to the district.

Various entities have been identified to support and enhance the state of Oklahoma's vision for healthier individuals, families, and communities. These entities include the schools, state and federal agencies, and public and private service providers. The vision calls for increased school-linked services (see School-Linked Services figure on p. 9) and an educational system increasingly responsive to the needs of children and their families. It calls upon the legislature for adequate, responsive funding as well as support for collaborative partnerships.

Assisted by OCCY, the thirty districts across the state were asked to develop five-year plans to improve conditions, services, and outcomes for children, youth, and families in their area. OCCY staff provided inservice and strategic planning assistance to every district in Oklahoma. The Strategic Planning Process, which local personnel were trained to use, was a strategic planning process especially suited to service providers and educators. The Institute for Cultural Affairs (ICA) developed the process.

The ICA works internationally to promote a culture of leadership and participation and is widely known for its use of participatory methods. Known as Technology of Participation, these methods help people plan together and reflect on their experience and also help motivate them to action. (See Appendix B for contact information.)

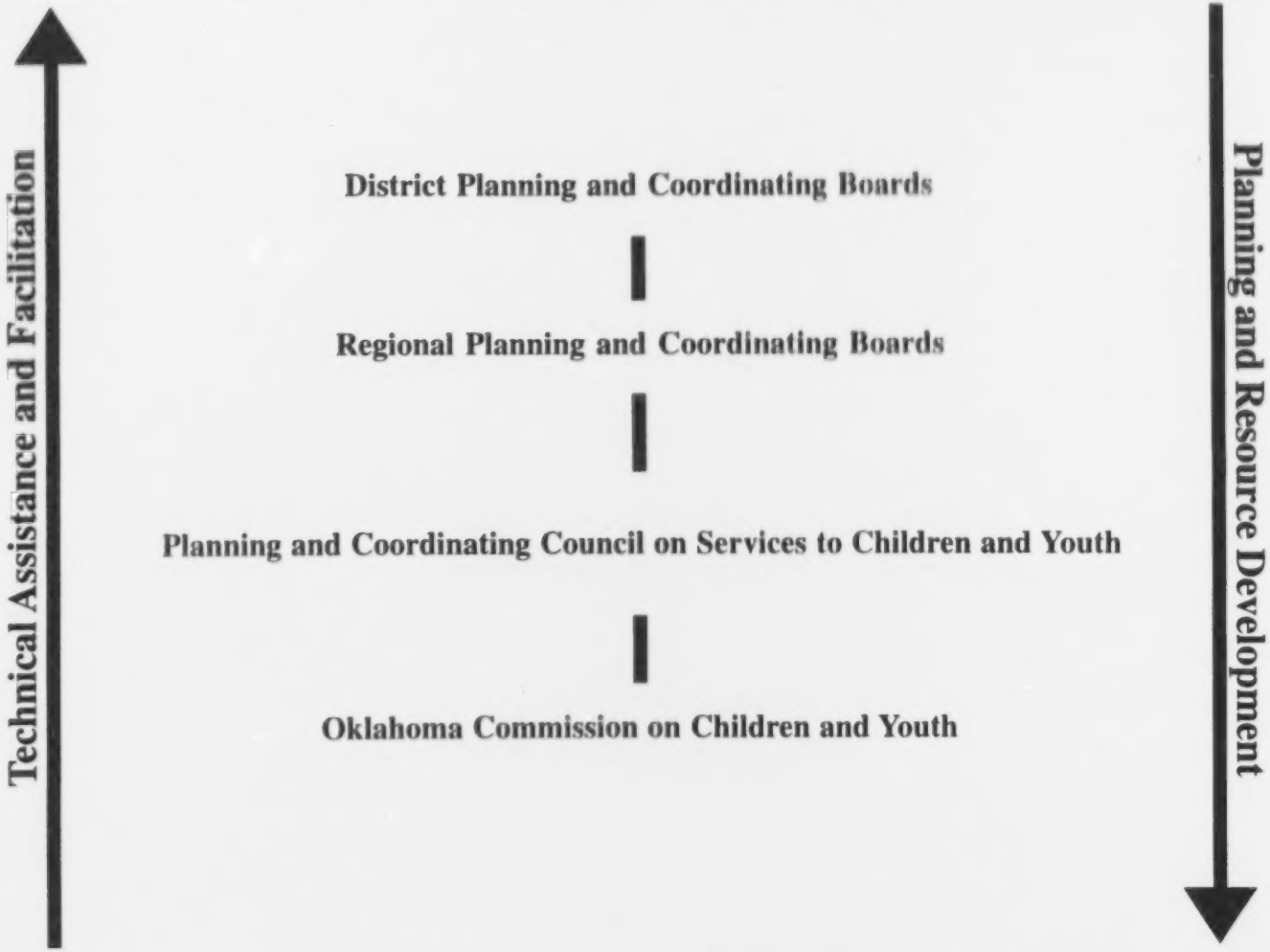
In addition to developing yearly implementation plans, each district board has a specific map and time line to follow to move toward their goals and realize their vision at the local level by the year 2000. Each of the district's plans includes a vision, contradictions (barriers), strategic directions, action arenas, five-year time line, implementation briefs, and a priority wedge. For example, one of the plans includes the following:

- a vision of a multi-service center for families
- contradictions such as bureaucracy, resources, inertia, public attitudes, and isolation
- specific strategic directions for marketing the vision, supporting the change process, and implementing the initiative
- a five-year plan to accomplish those strategic goals

- an implementation brief that addresses why, how, by whom, and when the actions in the plan would be taken
- a priority wedge that details in a graphic display the activities necessary to initiate the plan

Planning and Coordinating Organization

NCRVE, MDS-1092


Technical Assistance and Facilitation
District Planning and Coordinating Boards
Regional Planning and Coordinating Boards
Planning and Coordinating Council on Services to Children and Youth
Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth
Planning and Resource Development

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, 1995.

School-Linked Services

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, 1995.

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The Pennsylvania Initiative

Since 1990, Pennsylvania's support educators have been using what is called Instructional Support Teams (ISTs) as resources to better meet the needs of students with persistent academic, social, emotional, or behavioral problems. The teams serve as pre-referral intervention groups that link all school resources.

Rationale

Too often, students who have special needs but do not qualify for special education services or are still in the assessment process do not receive help because no one is there to see that they get what they need from school and community service providers. ISTs help to meet these students' needs by assisting their teachers. Their approach is based on the premise that many teachers need help identifying solutions to instructional challenges caused by students increasingly complex academic, behavioral, social, and emotional needs. Team members support teachers by engaging in collaborative problem solving and assisting them with precise, classroom-based assessment.

Group Composition

Every IST includes, at the very least, the principal, the students teacher, and a support teacher. Parents are encouraged to actively participate. Depending on the students needs, other school personnel involved may include the school psychologist, subject specialists (e.g., remedial mathematics teacher, reading specialists), speech therapists, and school nurses.

Implementation

Parents or school staff may refer students for assistance. While some teams meet on a regular basis, there is no specific length of membership or schedule of meetings for ISTs. Both teachers and parents can request instructional support for the students. The team then works with the classroom teacher to identify what will work best for the student.

The support teachers serve as the direct link between the team and the student. They are responsible for helping classroom teachers meet the goals set by the entire team. Support teachers work with students to assess their needs in the classroom, and they model strategies to help teachers, parents, and others who provide direct services.

The ISTs also serve as a bridge between special and regular education programs. Team members help the regular teacher develop accommodations to help students with disabilities succeed in the general education environment. They also help the regular teacher make the best use of the support services required by Individual Education Plans.

Training and Evaluation

The Pennsylvania Department of Education provides training to all IST members through training consultants who work on-site, specialized training workshops, and regional networks for follow-up and support. Evaluation of the program is conducted on-site by a three-person team consisting of practitioners and training consultants from other districts. The evaluation is conducted during a program's second year of implementation and focuses on organization and management of the program, student assessment, interventions, and identification and screening of students who need instructional support and/or multidisciplinary evaluation. For further information, refer to the article entitled "Building Special and Regular Education: The Pennsylvania Initiative," in the February 1996 issue of *Educational Leadership*. (See Appendix B for contact information.)

A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING A STUDENT SERVICES SYSTEM

This paper is designed to address the needs and interests of those who are thinking of developing or improving a student services system. In the section that follows, we offer five steps on how to proceed. The steps are outlined in a way that allows you to skip to those steps that seem most appropriate to your situation.

Step 1: Identify the Need

The first step is to conduct a brainstorming activity, either by yourself or with a group of people with the same general interests. Use the following as guide questions:

- What is the current student services situation like in our school/district?
- Is this situation satisfactory/unsatisfactory?

- What kind of student services system do we want? (The answers to this question could also lead to statements that can be used for the visioning activity.)

- Why do we want this kind of system?

You may want to use a more formal needs assessment instrument or tool to aid you in the above activity. Gysbers and Henderson (1994) recommend that schools/districts develop their own needs assessment surveys; but they also note that, since individual states may already have instruments available, it is a good idea to find out what resources have already been developed. Another useful book for needs assessment is *Need Analysis: Tools for the Human Services and Education*, by J. McKillip (Sage Publications, 1987).

Step 2: Develop a Vision[1]

The second step is to develop a vision—a mental image or picture of your direction or goal. Vision provides guidance to an organization by articulating what it wishes to attain. Vision answers the questions, Who is involved? What do they plan to accomplish? and Why are they doing this? More important is the concept of a shared vision, which is developed in conjunction with other groups in the school or community and results in collegial and collaborative relationships. The following four steps facilitate the conceptualization of vision and lead to its becoming a vision statement:

1. Know your organization. (Use Handout VI-6 as a guide.)

2. Locate critical individuals. (Use Transparency VI-9 as a guide.)

3. Involve critical individuals in the organization, school, or community in developing the vision. (Use Handout VI-7 as a guide.)

4. Explore the possibilities. What are the future trends that will impact the organization? What will the schools be like in the future? What does this mean for school students? Develop a statement of what your organization will do or aim for in light of these future trends. (Use Handout VI-8 as a guide.)

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[1] The following discussion is adapted from the Summer 1993 issue of *Issues . . . about Change* (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1993) and Leadership for Change training materials. (See Appendix B for contact information.)

Handout VI-6

KNOW YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT

1. What is the purpose of your school or district?
2. What value does the school or district provide to society?
3. What are the attitudes and beliefs in the school or district? Who has these attitudes and beliefs?
4. What are the norms in the school or district?
5. What are the relationships in the school or district? Who are the people involved?
6. What are the physical surroundings and structures?
7. What are the formal policies and rules that affect the school or district?
8. What type of resources does the school or district have?

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Transparency VI-9

- **students**
- **parents**
- **business leaders**
- **other community members**
- **child advocacy groups**
- **major employers**
- **representatives of postsecondary institutions**

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Handout VI-7

INVOLVE CRITICAL INDIVIDUALS

Name	Reasons for Including This Individual

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Handout VI-8

EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITIES

- Consider future trends
  - Future trends in students' needs?
  - Future trends in parents' needs?
  - Future expectations or requirements of our students on the part of employers or from postsecondary institutions?
  - Changes in social, economic, political, or technical areas that will impact our organization?
- Determine student outcomes
  - Knowledgeable
  - Empathetic
  - Self-determined
  - Strategic
- Discuss what's ideal

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Put the Vision Statement in Writing

There are four steps involved in this process:

1. Identify commonalities.

2. Write commonalities in sentences.

3. Get input from whole group.

4. Determine if vision statement is (1) future-oriented, (2) likely to lead to a clearly better future for the students, (3) consistent with the school's or district's purpose/mission, and (4) clear and concise. (Refer to Handout VI-11.)

A vision statement may be a short paragraph or an elaborate single page document. Below are examples of vision statements:

Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth Vision

The heart of the State's vision for the year 2000 is healthier individuals, families, and communities. Elements in realizing this vision include empowered, resilient individuals and families residing in proactive, involved communities where families are supported, cultural diversity is respected, life is valued, and there is moral and ethical responsibility at all levels. Supportive of these ideals, the vision addresses basic needs such as housing; viable job and economic opportunities; affordable quality child care and preschool; affordable and accessible health care; and affordable, accessible, and reliable transportation. Services envisioned include a continuum of care for youth and their families, and structured youth enrichment programs. (Taken from *Childrens Agenda 2000: A State Plan for Services to Children, Youth and Families*, Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth, and Oklahoma Planning and Coordinating Council for Services to Children and Youth, 1995)

Garland Independent School Districts Career and Technology Education Guidance Program Mission

The mission of Career and Technology Education in Katy Independent School District is to integrate career awareness, technical preparation, and academic excellence to train students to become productive citizens in a global workforce. Career and Technology Education students will be

- Self-Directed Learners, who demonstrate the ability to create options for themselves, monitor and evaluate their progress, and assume responsibility for continued learning.

- Collaborative Workers, who use effective leadership and group skills to develop and manage interpersonal relationships within culturally and organizationally diverse settings.

- Complex Thinkers, who identify, access, integrate, and use available resources and information to reason, make decisions, and solve complex problems in a future characterized by constantly evolving technology.

- Community Contributors, who contribute time, energies, and talents to improving the welfare of others and the quality of life in diverse communities.

- Quality Producers, who create intellectual, artistic, practical, and physical products which reflect originality, high standards, and the use of advanced technologies. (Taken from Garland Independent School District's Career and Technology Education Guidance Program, 1995)

Zapata High School's Mission

The Vision for Zapata High School is to empower students with knowledge and confidence in taking initiatives for a continuous re-engineering of its entire program, reflecting creativity, constant improvement, synergy, and innovation to transcend the status quo. (Taken from Zapata High School's Comprehensive Career Guidance and Counseling Program, 1997)

Handout VI-11

PUT IT IN WRITING

- Identify commonalities.
- Write commonalities in sentences.

  refine - refine
- Get input from whole group.

  refine - refine
- Determine if vision statement is
  1. future-oriented?
  2. likely to lead to a clearly better future for the students?
  3. consistent with the school's or district's purpose/mission?
  4. clear and concise?

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Step 3: Identify Resources

The third step in developing or improving a student services system is identifying resources. To begin this step, expand the second activity in the visioning process ("Involve critical individuals") by making a list of potential resources in your school and community. A school directory, your personnel directories, and local phone books can be good starting points. Make a list of the following:

- *People* who will be involved in many different roles. Do not rule out anyone at this stage. Almost every member of the school and community will have a role to play, no matter how small.

- *Businesses and government agencies* that will be involved as team members or that can provide support. These may include local hospitals, banks, and other companies, as well as social services agencies, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) offices, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) or Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), and other organizations.

Step 4: Make a Plan

The fourth step is to draw out a plan of action using the questions below. Some of the questions seem very simple but they will still need to be addressed because team members need to know what their commitment will mean in terms of time, effort, and resources:

- *Team Composition*. What will the student services team look like? Review the program examples, if necessary. Will it be different for each student? Who will take the lead? Will leadership be permanent or rotated? What will be the roles and responsibilities of the team members? Who will handle records?

- *Procedures*. How will the team organize its activities? What will be done during meetings? Where will meetings be held? Who will call meetings? How often? Is there a need for a set of guidelines for operation? Talk about confidentiality of records. How will problems be handled? Is there a need for an advisory board? If so, who will be the potential members?

Because these questions and activities will generate a multitude of suggestions, the group will have to decide on which approach to take for making decisions. Some tools that can be used for shared decisionmaking are included below:

- *Group consensus*. Decisions made by consensus require input from each member and agreement that he or she understands, supports, and is willing to implement the group's decision. This method is ideal for partnerships because the process requires a thorough discussion of alternatives, allows all voices to be heard, and fosters commitment. However, consensus decisionmaking can be time consuming. To reach a decision in the time allotted, groups sometimes must resort to another method such as majority rule.

- *Committee decisionmaking*. Sometimes a few members are appointed to a committee to decide an issue on behalf of the full membership. This method expedites the work process; however, all members of the larger group may not support the committee's decision. If the larger group frequently overrides decisions, committee members may begin to question their investment of time and effort.

- *Majority rule*. With this approach, the greatest number of votes carries the decision. Because it is a winner-take-all method, it may erode participants' commitment to collaboration and is probably most useful for deciding minor issues.

Step 5: Get Down to the Nitty-Gritty

The final step in the development of student services is to provide for full implementation of comprehensive student services. Two critical components of effective implementation are training and evaluation.

- *Training*. Training is a necessary prerequisite to implementation of the new system. With your group, make decisions about the following:

    - Who will provide the training? If no one in your group has had any training related to student services or the system which you have put together, it may be necessary to secure training from a known training provider such as a

local college or university, the state department of education, or social services.

- What topics will be offered/requested? In addition to training on the use of your system, it will be helpful to get training on dealing with change.
- When will the training be held?
- Who will fund the training?

- *Evaluation*. Is it necessary? Yes, it is critically important to your efforts. Your group will have to address this issue and decide on the following:
  - Who will conduct the evaluation?
  - Who will be evaluated?
  - How often?

CONCLUSION

This publication is designed to offer a guide for developing a student services system in your school/district. Each of the sections in this publication contains questions and activities that will help you in the process. The list of potential contacts will be a good *starting point* through which you can develop a network of people and organizations to confer with as you build your system.

Other schools and programs have developed their own effective student services systems. Good programs share much in common: They start with an original vision, provide ample time for planning and training, conduct developmental activities through collaborative efforts, and show a commitment to ongoing evaluation. The success of these programs demonstrates that a responsive, proactive student services system must be implemented through the well-planned, collaborative efforts of school, community, and business representatives and other supportive individuals and groups.

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APPENDIX A
IMPROVING STUDENT SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES BRIEF, VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

NCRVE

National Center for Research in Vocational Education

University of California, Berkeley

Office of Student Services'

BRIEF

Volume 7, Number 2

IMPROVING STUDENT SERVICES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein and Esmeralda S. Cunanan

Comprehensive, coordinated student services enhance opportunities.

While many believe an excellent faculty and a rich curriculum are the necessary components to improving student outcomes, there is another area often overlooked by reformers — a comprehensive, coordinated student services system designed to enhance every student's chance for success. The means must be found to help all students move successfully from one educational level to the next and/or from school to work and lifelong learning. An efficient and comprehensive student services delivery system will help attain this goal. This BRIEF provides the rationale for such a system and describes the wide range of services high schools need to provide. A second BRIEF in 1996 will provide information about a coordinated student services delivery system. (This BRIEF is adapted from an NCRVE CenterWork article currently in press.)

Background

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) of 1994 supports providing *all* students equal access to the full range of program components, including recruitment and enrollment activities. The Act also places emphasis on improved career guidance and counseling services and the necessity for students to select a career major by the 11th grade. These and other services must be improved to strengthen the transition process. For example, all students will profit from career counseling; child care and transportation services allow single parents and teen parents to take advantage of their educational opportunities; job placement services assist students in their job search and also support good matches of students and employers; follow-up services improve programs; and student assessment helps all students understand their strengths.

In January 1995, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education reorganized its Office of Special Populations to become the Office of Student Services (OSS). Their work began by conducting a literature search to identify (a) the full range of student services represented in secondary schools and (b) the best models for effectively delivering these services. (Contact the OSS for a summary of the literature review.)

Surprisingly, the literature review *failed to uncover a single listing of all student services* one might expect to find in a secondary institution. Furthermore, the literature search *revealed no comprehensive student services delivery models*. While the literature is replete with information about student services, most references center on models for delivering services to students enrolled in special education, or services for other students considered to be at risk, or models for career development and guidance and counseling services.

Terms associated with student services:

- ***student affairs***
- ***student personnel***
- ***student development***
- ***support services***
- ***supplemental services***

Furthermore, even the "student services" terminology is problematic. Several terms are associated with and/or used interchangeably with student services. For example, *student affairs*, *student personnel*, *student development*, and *support services* are associated with student services in the literature. In addition, the terms *support services* and *supplemental services* are both used in recent legislation. While *supplemental services* is defined in the legislation (Carl D. Perkins Vocational and applied Technology Education Act, Sec. 521(38)) as "...curriculum modification, equipment modification, classroom modification, supportive personnel, and instructional aids and services," support services is not specifically defined. The Perkins Act indicates *support services* pertain to

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services such as counseling, special transportation needs, English-language instruction, mentoring, child care, and special aids. In the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and in day-to-day practice, the terms are used interchangeably.

What Are Student Services?

In lieu of an acceptable definition in the literature, the Office of Student Services defines student services as those services provided by an educational institution to facilitate learning and the successful transition from school to work, military, or more education. To be effective, services must be:

- drawn from all the resources of the school and community;
- available to **all** students, including those
  - enrolled in college-preparatory programs,
  - enrolled in vocational-technical programs (who may or may not be college-bound), and
  - who are members of special populations;
- provided on an individual basis as needed; and
- coordinated to ensure all students receive the necessary services.

Services should match students' school life stages.

The Office of Student Services (see figure 1) depicts three stages of attendance:

(1) **pre-enrollment** — the period when one is preparing to enroll in a secondary school;
(2) **enrollment** — the period when the student is enrolled; and
(3) **post enrollment** — the period when the student has left the program whether they have advanced to the next level or withdrawn.

Provide basic services during:

- ***pre-enrollment***
- ***enrollment***
- ***post enrollment***

Students require some services during all three levels and others at different stages of enrollment. Of course, each student's needs will be unique. The OSS listing includes **basic services** that should be available during all three stages. Some of these services, such as counseling, food services, transportation services, safety and security services, and medical/nursing services, are often taken for granted by students and parents. Other basic or fundamental services include child care assistance, psychological services, social work/social services, and special accommodations.

During the **pre-enrollment stage**, students need certain services to facilitate their movement to the next level. Orientation to their new school is very helpful. Appropriate assessment should take place as well as career awareness and exploration activities. Students will benefit from career/educational counseling prior to entering a high school program.

During **enrollment**, most students will continue to need educational/career counseling including career exploration and awareness, career/transition planning (including financial aid), and additional assessment. Some students will need tutoring, most will benefit from a mentor, and almost all can use academic advisement. Job referral and job placement services help ensure students smooth transition to work.

While early school leavers and graduates traditionally have minor contact with the former institution, many of them would still profit from job referral, job placement, and counseling. There seems to be a growing trend for former students in the **post-enrollment stage** to return frequently to their previous school or college to serve on advisory councils, act as mentors to current students, offer jobs to students, and to provide other assistance.

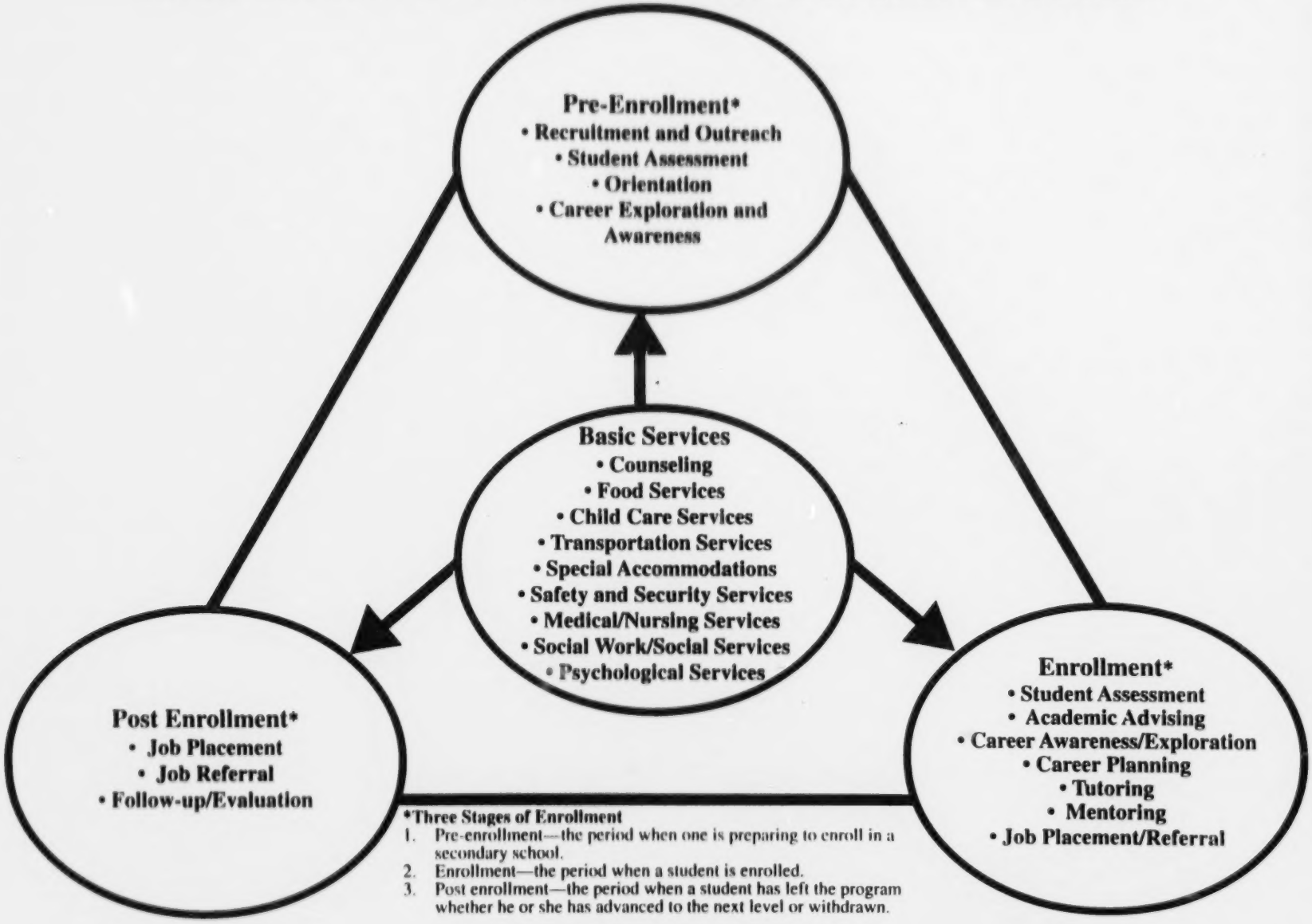
Delivering Student Services

While there is probably no single "best" approach to providing essential student services effectively, the following are some general guidelines that schools can use in building a student services system:

1. Use all available resources, including those in the school, the total school system, and the community. Parents, students, business and industry representatives, school administrators, faculty, counselors, and all school staff, as well as community service providers must work cooperatively and collaboratively.

Figure 1

ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO FACILITATE STUDENT SUCCESS



*Three Stages of Enrollment

1. Pre-enrollment—the period when one is preparing to enroll in a secondary school.
2. Enrollment—the period when a student is enrolled.
3. Post enrollment—the period when a student has left the program whether he or she has advanced to the next level or withdrawn.

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2. Assess the needs of *every* student to determine necessary services. Assessment is imperative in determining how to serve students best and avoid duplication of programs and services.

3. Implement a comprehensive management system to ensure all students are receiving needed services.

4. Use the developmental approach. Through this approach, each individual, while progressing through some common growth stages with related needs, is still recognized as unique.

5. Design and conduct staff development activities that will prepare the school and the community for the work ahead. Workshops or seminars can focus on the following topics: how the new system works, curriculum integration, team building, time management, and others.

6. Resolve issues that can impede the implementation of an inclusive student services system (e.g., coordinating several services, providing time for personnel to work together, funding).

7. Conduct on-going evaluation and follow-up for program improvement and to determine student success.

8. Form a student services team (SST). As a team, student services personnel can effectively provide the necessary student services.

What Is The Student Services Team?

Form a team of professionals who specialize in:

- ***counseling,***
- ***job placement,***
- ***consulting,***
- ***assessment,***
- ***rehabilitation,***
- ***career and educational planning, and***
- ***other related services.***

The student services team consists of professionals who specialize in providing counseling, job placement, consulting, assessment, and other related services to ensure the career, educational, social, emotional, intellectual, and healthy development of all students. Typically, a student services team consists of the school counselor, social worker, psychologist, nurse, and other related professionals (Schmidt, 1993, p. 35), as well as special education resource teachers. Chapter I teachers, special populations coordinators, assessment specialists, para-professionals, and rehabilitation counselors (Tennessee State Department of Education, no date).

Other school services personnel who should be included on the team are transition specialists, school-to-work coordinators, multicultural services professionals, tutors, academic advisors, job coaches, and recruitment representatives. Local service providers should also be represented. Inclusion of employment, health and social services, welfare, and other community services will further strengthen the team. Representatives from food services, child care, and transportation could meet periodically with the team.

Ideally, student services are centrally located or found in areas with good access. To coordinate the various services, a director is needed. Commitment and collaboration from among the different student services professionals are essential to organizing and implementing a comprehensive student services system. Members of a unified team collaborate with one another to make the various components work as one. They strive toward one goal - to prepare every student for success in careers and lifelong learning.

What Is Ahead?

In 1996, the Office of Student Services will work to encourage systems change so that student services, which are based on the developmental career needs of all students, become an integral part of the eduational process. To learn more about implementing an inclusive student services delivery system, the OSS staff will work with two schools who seek to improve their student services system. Another BRIEF will be published next year highlighting the results of this study.

NATIONAL SEARCH FOR EXEMPLARY CAREER GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING PROGRAMS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

For Immediate Release
December 1, 1995

Contact: *Dr. Carolyn Maddy-Bernstein*
Phone: *(217) 333-0807*

WHAT: The U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education Office of Student Services, in cooperation with the National Association of State Career Development/Guidance Supervisors and the American Vocational Association will conduct a search for exemplary career guidance and counseling programs.

WHEN: Completed applications must be postmarked no later than **March 15, 1996**

HOW: Interested individuals from public and private settings and various educational levels (comprehensive high school, specialized vocational high school, secondary level area vocational center, alternative secondary school, postsecondary/technical institute, community college, adult and continuing education agency, K-adult programs) are invited to submit a comprehensive application describing and documenting the components of their career guidance and counseling programs. Completed applications will be reviewed by a national panel of experts in the field and those with the highest rankings will be visited by a team from the search sponsors.

WHY: Programs selected for recognition will be comprehensive, developmental programs designed to serve **all** populations. These programs will be announced in a variety of national newsletters and during national conferences. Information about the programs will be highlighted in U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education's and NCRVE Office of Student Services' (OSS) publications and presentations, and entered into the OSS database of exemplary programs. Through the database, information about exemplary programs is disseminated widely to various individuals, agencies, and other education institutions.

WHO: Those interested in obtaining an application or wishing to learn more about the search should contact:

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OFFICE OF STUDENT SERVICES' BRIEF
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The Office of Student Services of the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, University of California, Berkeley, is housed at the University of Illinois. The Office of Student Services works nationally to promote the full range of quality programs and services that assist all students (secondary and postsecondary), including members of special populations, to successfully transition from school to work.

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